

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 19, 2001 LB 598

the out-of-home placement issues from that that you'd care to share because of this debate today or...

SENATOR JENSEN: No.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Well, I do...so, and I...I'm concerned about some of the things that I...that I've heard today about this particular study and what its findings are going to be, and the timing of its release. Do you know when it's going to be released?

SENATOR JENSEN: No, I do not.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you. I think we all know that we have issues that are problems within the juvenile justice system. We all know it. And today we're being asked to vote for something that I think needs more time, especially in dealing with placement issues. There is a study that's going to be coming out called the point-in-time study. I think some pieces of it may have already come out in some of the briefings from the department, but there is more to it, and it has to do with placement issues. And we should have had that information if it's available now. We should have had that information. But I am going to go to the information that I already have, that I already know about, that someone didn't have to risk making a phone call to my office to tell me about, but I'm going to talk about what we know about placements in the juvenile justice system currently. We know there is bias. We know from outside studies of the state that there is a disproportionately high number of minority youth in out-of-home placements, and that's what we're talking about here, kids in out-of-home placements; not just Kearney and Geneva but other types of institutional group home settings. We also know that girls are represented at Geneva, for example, that are there for lesser crimes than boys at Kearney. We also know, as a state, we lock up more girls than we do compared to other states in our peer group and other states nationally. That information is in the Juvenile Services Master Plan and, as I mentioned earlier, a subject of another bill that I introduced this session. And I think those are serious, serious problems. Now did the court cause those problems? I don't know. Did the department because of their